

# News Release



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Names and Plans for Cornfield and Taylor Yard Go to State Park Commission for Vote**

### *Extensive Community Input Guided Process*

Los Angeles – The California State Parks and Recreation Commission is set to take several votes on the future of Cornfield and Taylor Yard park properties this Friday. The two properties have been at the heart of a community revolution to stop commercial development and provide for more open space and parkland near downtown Los Angeles for more than a decade.

Cornfield and Taylor Yard, two of the last open space parcels within the densely urbanized and most park deficit group of neighborhoods in the nation, will be before the State Park Commission public meeting on Friday, June 10, 2005, beginning at 9 a.m., at the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens, 570 West Avenue 26, Los Angeles, California.

The Commission will be asked to vote on the naming, classification, General Plans and Environmental Impact Reports for both parks. The plans before the Commission present a vision and guidelines that will direct the development and use of these parks for years to come. Additionally, the classification of these properties provides further guidance to State Parks in the operation of the facilities.

“The public involvement in the struggle to create public parks on these two parcels of land is unprecedented and should be applauded,” said Ruth Coleman, Director of California State Parks. “Hundreds of community members and groups took a stand and said no to development and then turned out in huge numbers at an extensive number of public meetings to assist State Parks in creating a vision for the sites that is now before the Commission.”

For both the Cornfield and Taylor Yard, community groups and individuals have contributed input and plan suggestions at a combined total of 31 public meetings and

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workshops since January 2002. State Parks knows of no other park planning projects that have had more community involvement than Cornfield and Taylor Yard.

For the Cornfield property, it is recommended that the park be classified as a State Historic Park and be named Los Angeles State Historic Park. A series of discussions with stakeholders, including the Cornfield Advisory Committee, unanimously preferred this classification and naming to focus on the extensive and significant cultural history of the site.

For Taylor Yard, it is recommended that the park be classified as a State Recreation Area and be named Rio de Los Angeles State Park. The classification of a State Recreation Area (SRA) was chosen because such areas provide multiple recreational opportunities, have terrain capable of withstanding extensive human impact, and are in proximity to large population center and major routes of travel.

### **The Cornfield**

The Cornfield Property is a 32-acre parcel located near downtown Los Angeles, bordered by North Broadway and North Spring Streets. It was purchased by State Parks in December 2001, after the Friends of the Los Angeles River and other organizations organized under the moniker of Chinatown Yards Alliance and successfully challenged a proposal to turn it into a warehouse site.

Following the purchase, legislation established the 36-member Cornfield Advisory Committee of community members that met numerous times over a two-year period, working with State Parks staff, to develop recommendations for a park vision and an appropriate name and classification for the historic site. Those recommendations then became the blueprint for the Department's public meetings that then resulted in the proposed General Plan.

This General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report, now before the Commission for a vote, calls for a Preferred Park Concept which revolves around the theme entitled the "Los Angeles Flow of History." The plan proposes a variety of land uses, to include:

1. Cultural Activities – where visitors can learn about the cultural heritage of Los Angeles, through indoor an outdoor gathering spaces, visitor information, general park orientation, and interpretive activities.
2. Recreational Open Space – where visitors can enjoy a variety of outdoor informal recreational activities, such as: informal playfield activities, family and group picnicking, jogging, casual walks or bicycling.
3. Garden Open Space – Where visitors can take part in a variety of garden experiences, such as nature study, photography, gardening classes, demonstrations of traditional used of plants and more.
4. Natural Open Space -- This space will demonstrate the natural habitats that may have once existed in and near the park site, with an

emphasis on reestablishing native plant communities. In this area, visitors can study nature, observe birds and learn about the role of natural resources in the history of Los Angeles.

### **Taylor Yard**

In 1999, more than three dozen community groups formed The Coalition for a State Park at Taylor Yard, advocating for the purchase of several parcels. State Parks now owns Parcel D, 40-acres purchased in December 2001; and, Parcel G-1, 17-acres purchased in December 2003. Twenty acres of Parcel D is being leased to the City of Los Angeles.

The City of Los Angeles and State Parks are presently engaged in a unique partnership to jointly develop Parcel D in a seamless manner, incorporating community wishes regarding a provision for formal recreational facilities and the Department's interests in providing passive recreational opportunities associated with the Los Angeles River corridor.

Before the Commission is the Rio De Los Angeles State Park (Taylor Yard) General Plan and Environmental Impact Report. The plan contains a preferred park concept, which comes from the two alternatives reviewed by the public and reflecting the statewide interests, rules and regulations relevant to park planning. This concept allows for the joint planning and use design, with a transitional open space on Parcel D to buffer the formal recreational uses on the City's 20-acres from the passive uses anticipated on the 20-acres retained by the state as a natural area.

The final concept presents the best of what can be found in state and local parks, a seamless and sustainable blend of active and passive recreational activities. The City half will have an active sports complex, with a wide variety of features, including the following:

- Five soccer fields – One regulation, three junior and one multipurpose competition sports field.
- Two regulation tennis courts
- Two baseball fields
- Four regulation basketball courts
- Multi-purpose trail with distance markers
- Two children's play areas
- Children's water play area
- Short-term area for portable skate-park facility

The State half, closer to the Los Angeles River, will be designed with natural features. This park is viewed by many as key to restoring the valuable natural resources and wildlife species along a series of riverfront parks that creates a Los Angeles River Greenway. It has the potential to provide a network of trails extending from the San Fernando Valley to the Pacific Ocean along the river corridor. The State half will include the following features:

- River "Ox-Bow" riparian corridor natural area

- Open space, natural parkland area for picnicking, informal ball play
- Bicycle and walking paths
- Group and individual picnic areas
- Natural amphitheater for special events
- Educational panels and interpretative overlook
- Building(s): could include restrooms, community room, concession, service and support.

The general plan proposal being considered by the Commission is limited to the areas operated only by State Parks. The City, in a coordinated effort with State Parks, has prepared its own CEQA and NEPA documentation for the City-leased 20-acre portion of Parcel D.

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